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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/921,141	08/03/2001	Hiroshige Kikuchi	500.40416X00	6408
20457 7590 02/27/2007 ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP 1300 NORTH SEVENTEENTH STREET SUITE 1800 ARLINGTON, VA 22209-3873			EXAMINER SHAAWAT, MUSSA A	
			ART UNIT 3627	PAPER NUMBER

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	02/27/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	09/921,141		KIKUCHI ET AL.	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	Mussa A. Shaawat		3627	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 November 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 21-43 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 21-43 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. This action is responsive to the Amendment received on November 07, 2006. Claims 1-20 have been cancelled. Claims 21-25, 27-29, 32, 34-35, 37-39 and 43 have been amended. Claims 21-43 are pending examination.

2. Applicant's arguments, filed on November 07, 2006, have been fully considered and are persuasive; therefore, the non-final rejection mailed on August 07, 2006 has been withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

4. Claims 21-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Sakakibara et al., US Patent No. 6,476,728.

5. As to claim 21, Sakakibara teaches An information electric appliance renting system in which a service providing company rents to each of a plurality of different individual contractors at least one information electric appliance based upon contracts between the service providing company and the plurality of different individual contractors (see col.3, lines 55-64),

Wherein the at least one information electric appliances enables sending of data indicative of at least electric power consumed thereby to a rent managing server of the service providing company through a communication line and also enables receipt from the rent managing server of data relating to rent for the at lease one information electric appliance which includes an amount corresponding to the electric power consumed thereby so that the service providing company receives from the plurality of different individual contractors payment of the rent and pays an electric power company an amount corresponding to the total consumed electric power of all of the rented information electric appliances of the plurality of different individual contractors (see col.5, lines 23-33, col.6 lines 48-63).

6. As to claim 22, Sakakibara teaches an information electric appliance renting system according to claim 21, wherein the service providing company contracts with the electric power company to pay for electric power consumed by the rented information electric appliances of the different individual contractors based upon rates for the total consumed electric power of the rented information electric appliances of the plurality of different individual contractors (see col.7, lines 40-60).

7. As to claim 23, Sakakibara teaches An information electric appliance renting system according to claim 21, wherein the data sent by the at least one information electric appliance to the rent managing server further includes information relating to at least one of manufacture and use of the at least one information electric appliance (col.6 lines 47-67).

8. As to claims 24, claim 24 contains similar limitations as claim 21; therefore, it is rejected under the same rationale.

9. As to claims 25, claim 25 contains similar limitations as claim 22; therefore, it is rejected under the same rationale.

10. As to claims 26, claim 26 contains similar limitations as claim 23; therefore, it is rejected under the same rationale.

11. As to claim 27, Sakakibara teaches An information electric appliance renting system according to claim 26, wherein the at least one information electric appliance of respective individual contractors include at least one first information electric appliance which is connected to the Internet, and a second information electric appliance which is connected to said first information electric appliance through a communication line (see col.7 lines 65-col.8 lines 9).

12. As to claim 28, Sakakibara teaches an information electric appliance renting system according to claim 26, wherein the rent managing server arithmetically determines the consumed electric power rate of the leased information electric appliances for the electric power company which supplies electric power to the rented information electric appliances, and enables supplying the electric power company with data relating to the consumed electric power rate through a communication network (see col.6 lines 48-67).

13. As to claim 29, Sakakibara teaches An information electric appliance renting system according to claim 26, wherein the at least one information electric appliance of respective individual contractors include a first information electric appliance which is

connected to the rent managing server of said service providing company through a communication network and a second information electric appliance which is connected to the first information electric appliance through a communication line (see col.3 lines 55-col.4 line 6).

14. As to claim 30, Sakakibara teaches An information electric appliance renting system according to claim 29, wherein the first information electric appliance enables display thereon of the data relating to the other information the consumed electric power rates of the first and second information electric appliances (see col.7, lines 13-25).

15. As to claim 31, Sakakibara teaches an information electric appliance renting system according to claim 29, wherein the first information electric appliance enables maintenance diagnosis or replacement diagnosis of the second information electric appliance, which is connected to the first information electric appliance through the communication line col.8 lines 35-54.

16. As to claims 32-43, they contain similar limitations as above; therefore, they are rejected under the same rationale.

References Cited

17. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Bannai et al., US Pat. No. (7,130,832) "Energy service business method and system"

Yablonowski et al. US Pat. No. (6,535,859) "System and method for monitoring lighting systems"

Kao et al. US Pat. No. (5,901,067) "System for interactively selecting and activating groups of electrically powered devices"

Response To Arguments

18. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 21-43 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Contact Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mussa A. Shaawat whose telephone number is 571-272-2945. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri (8am-5:30pm).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Florian Zeender can be reached on 571-272-6790. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Mussa Shaawat
Examiner
AU3627


F. RYAN ZEENDER
PRIMARY EXAMINER